



POETICAL SERMON.

Psalm CXIX. Verse 71.

*It is good for me that I have been afflicted,
that I might learn thy statutes.*



HERE burns the fervent zeal, the God-like love
Of that most charming, that coelestial bard,
Whose heart with his ador'd Jehovah's held
Close and endearing union! Here shine
Fair inspiration's sweet peculiar graces!
Here glows the heart (tho' swell'd with sorrow's tide)
That breath'd soft raptures of becoming pray'r;
That tun'd high extasies of gen'rous praise,
And burn'd with undisssembled love to God!

B

Hark,

Hark, how the sacred choirister begins
 His animating strains!—— * “Supremely blest
 Are they who tread fair virtue’s paths, and walk
 In that delightful and unerring road,
 Which God points out to man! supremely blest
 Who keep his great commands; whose heart is knit
 To their belov’d Creator’s!”—Thus he fires
 The good man’s warmest zeal! thus elevates
 His noblest views! Till with transition sweet,
 Easy, and natural he passes on,
 With humble, but with ardent suit sincere,
 T’ invoke th’ Almighty’s never-failing aid;
 To prompt him on the stage of life; to guide
 His steps thro’ earth’s alluring paradise;
 To kindle in his breast that splendid lamp,
 That lights the road t’ unutterable bliss.
 In what coelestial, and pathetic sounds
 Does this sweet harmonist of heav’n attune
 His voice “Throughout all numbers absolute,”
 How gratefully he swells his notes of praise
 For such endearing mercy, grace, and love
 Vouchsaf’d, as fix upon his breast the seal
 Of endless peace! and with what firm resolve
 His steady heart is purpos’d to retain
 The stamp divine!— † “Thy statutes I will keep;
 Forsake me not, my righteous judge!”——
 How too does this high-favour’d proselyte
 Of God, all bath’d in sorrow-soothing tears
 Infectious, catch our sympathizing hearts,
 Blunt satyr’s keenest edge on the reflex
 Of past egregious crimes, and ’lure the mind

* Psalm cxix. verses 1st and 2d.

† Psalm cxix. 8.

To give him joy of reformation! —
 Behold the zealous convert now excel
 In mercy, grace, and truth, the sacred train
 Of amiable virtues! See him wrapt
 In meditation's highest strains! Behold
 Him plead, with heav'nly ire, 'gainst vice's shape
 Deform'd; exclaim against her pois'nous touch,
 And pour out floods of penitential grief!
 Hear him confess spontaneous the pow'r
 Of sin's alluring, baleful charms*; which erst,
 Until affliction, with her hand benign,
 Had stamp't him for her pupil, captive led
 His steps enchanted; and behold him now
 (Tho' toss'd in all the agonies of woe)
 To God's just will resign'd; and hear him bless
 The smarting rod, the gracious instrument,
 The kind behest of heaven; soft whisp'ring thus; —
 † Know, welcome, much admired saint! to taste
 Affliction's bitter, salutary cup,
 Is drinking draughts of providential love;
 Draughts that can quench the raging fire of lust,
 Can lull th' impassion'd soul to rest, and teach
 Thee to embrace the statutes of thy God.

Deign then, Urania, from thy heav'nly seat,
 Or if a worthier name delight thee more,
 Thou blessed SPIRIT of th' ETERNAL GOD!
 Deign from thy sacred dwelling to inspire
 Thy suppliant vot'ry; with thine hallow'd fire
 Touch the young preacher's lips; but rather far
 His mind irradiate, while he strives to sing

* Psalm cxix. 67.

† See the text.

(Tho'

(Tho' too unskill'd to tread poetic soil)

1. That temp'ral evil is by heav'n design'd

For man's eternal need; and hence infer

2. That he is strictly bound to acquiesce;—

To acquiesce?—rejoice! give thanks! adore!

1. Since man's first disobedience, and the taste

Of that delicious, but destructive fruit,

Which on our general mother did incur,

With her too fond believing mate, and all

Their hapless race, the penalty denounc'd

By wrath divine and just,—grief, labour, pain,

And all the pestilential streams that flow

From that initial source, deluge the earth.

But say why pestilential?—sprung from guilt,

The fountain-head of woe:—but by th' Almighty,

Out of justice and mercy infinite,

(Both weigh'd in even scale) sent to remind

Him of his state deprav'd,—to turn his eye

Inward,—to make him feel himself,—confess

His own degen'rate nature, and extol

The merits of his CHRIST—

When high-flown fortune plays her gaudy plumes,

With ev'ry glitt'ring toy to captivate

The sight, how threatening comet-like she shines!

Her darling oft debauches with her charms,

And 'lures him from his best and surest mark,—

The advent of eternity. When crown'd

With halcyon days, set up in high parade;

Adorn'd with honours, bloom'd with ev'ry bliss,

When thus we've built our airy nest on high,

(Fann'd with the gentlest gales) how apt to say;

* "Come let's enjoy each sublunary bliss,

* Apocrypha. Book of Wisdom, ii. 6, 7, 8.

And grasp the present sweets of life; come drink
 The mantling juices of the cheerful grape,
 And pour sweet odours, till satiety
 Hath drown'd all relish; let no vernal flow'r
 Escape; our mirth let freshest rose-buds crown;
 Thus do the glittering scenes of life produce
 Ideas gay, and swarms of images
 Fantastic, which, like insects numberless,
 Croud the warm breeze, and flutter in the sun;
 But in dark, low'ring, and inclement skies,
 Disperse and are no more.

O lost to truth,
 And virtue's charms! lost to the happy sense
 Of blest futurity! who dance away
 Their golden hours in vain delights, are lull'd
 In lux'ry's softest lap, and calmly float
 On pleasure's dimpling streams, distinguish'd high
 With heaven's choicest gifts; and yet forget;
 Ingrate! that spring from whence their blessings flow:
 As groves adorn'd with vernal leaves, exclude
 Hyperion's eye, to whose prolific rays
 They owe their beauteous verdant dress.

But once
 Let fortune turn her scales, and that of gold
 Fly upwards, airy light, with all her train
 Of shadowy titles, gewgaws, empty names,
 Weigh'd down, in adverse scale, by troubles, pain,
 Or dire disease; and mark the blest event.
 These powerful teachers, on whose tongue divine
 Persuasion dwells, gay fortune's idle sound
 Disclaim, contemn; a nobler patroness
 They boast, the fairest goddess of the skies,
 No fabled, airy phantom of the brain,

But breathes coelestial spirit; and her name
Is—PROVIDENCE. These faithful monitors,
By her commission, will present to man
The mirror of himself; wherein he sees
The swell'd account of num'rous vices past:
Hence sorrow wounds his guilty heart, as ploughs
Th' obdurate soil,—weeping repentance pours
Her soft'ning show'rs,—fair heavenly virtue sows
Her precious seed,—and blest eternity
At length her bounteous harvest yields.

Observe

The patriarchs of old! till sorrow pierc'd
Their steeld hearts, and Joseph's rigor struck
Into their breasts compunction deep, past ills
Remain'd neglected and forgot; but kind
Affliction taught this mutual intercourse;
* “ Guilty we are indeed as to our brother,
In that we saw the anguish of his soul,
When he besought us, and we wou'd not hear;
And therefore are involved in this distress.”—
Not so that † Sophist's pupils, ‡ who indulge
On beds of iv'ry, and delicious meats;
Who to the viol chaunt symphonious sounds,
And grateful instruments of music fit;
Who quaff the luscious, but the baneful, sweets
Of Bacchus' cup, and from chief ointments pour
Costly perfumes;—they mourn not Joseph's grief.
Thus does prosperity, like glaring day,
Put out unnumber'd heav'nly lights; eclipse
Fair reason's rays, and fairer virtue's charms
Obscure,—sad havock! social and divine:

* Gen. xlii. 21.

† Epicurus.

‡ Amos vi. 4, 5, 6.

Whilst our calamities are friends; excite
 Compassion's sweet endearing charms; the soil
 That virtue loves; bring back neglected time;
 By grace, lay hold on present time improv'd;
 By grace, predestine future virtuous deeds;
 By grace, predestine everlasting bliss.

Little do they, for whom proud fortune ope's
 Her golden chest, and smiling plenty pours
 Her choicest stores, reflect on the sad state
 Of wretched Lazarus;—of thousands bent
 Beneath heart-galling loads;—whilst they their funds
 Exhaust in selfish luxury; embrace
 The guilty joys of life; or prostrate fall,
 Adore, and idolize the golden god.

Behold yon shady, roseate, noon-tide bower
 Open to pamper'd vice! see how for him
 The fragrant woodbines mix their amorous folds!
 Roses and jessamine for him diffuse
 Their balmy sweets; for him th' Arabian gales
 Dispense their rich perfumes; whilst Gallia's hills
 Their juice nectareous yield; and Albion fair
 Spreads her ambrosial fruits. Nor does his heart
 Pay tribute due to heav'n; that sacred name
 Ill-suits unhallow'd lips. Yet buxom health
 (Fair queen of ev'ry sublunary bliss)
 Smiles on his rosy cheek; yet fame resounds
 His grand exploits, and puffs him to the world,
 With all the honours of an empty name.

Now change the scene, and view yon humble shed
 Where drooping, solitary virtue lies

Abandon'd

Abandon'd and forlorn : no arm sustains
 Her pensive head reclin'd ; no friend to sooth
 Her griefs, or sympathize her wrongs ; to pour
 The healing balm of comfort on her breast ;
 Or drop the tender tear ; but scorn instead,
 Disdain, and high-flush'd insolence, insult
 Her injur'd name. Yet patient and resign'd
 To heav'n's just will, with noble confidence,
 (Like that Chaldean, for his patience fam'd,
 And heav'nly resignation) thus resolves ;
 * " Ev'n on that mighty arm, which strikes the blow,
 The arm that slays me, I will ever trust."

O thou, who thus permitt'st th' unequal scales
 Of joy, and grief, to rise or fall ; and dost exalt
 Ordain, for gracious ends, that man should mourn !
 O Thou, whose eye all-seeing, nought can escape,
 Thou dread Jehovah ! or deceive thine heart
 Omniscient : wilt thou not at last repay
 For wrongs sustain'd, and honours falsely plac'd ?
 Shall good and evil travel to the land,
 Without distinction just, and due reward,
 Where night eternal reigns ?—No, not the time
 Will come, when vice, with all her guilty train,
 Pride, lust, and tyranny, shall sink appall'd ;
 And virtue, long dejected and oppress'd,
 The patient offspring of afflicting heav'n,
 Shall weep no more ; shall raise her drooping head ;
 Spring from affliction's soft irriguous soil,
 And be transplanted to the land of bliss—
 To that rich land auspicious providence

* Job. xiii. 15. See the former part.

Ordains

Ordains her faithful vot'ries; thither led,
 From her direction, by affliction's hand.
 And is affliction then the bitter source
 Of heav'nly sweets? Can she bequeath her sons
 That bright elysium where Jehovah sits
 Thron'd inaccessible; and where around
 Thousands of angels, his incessant choir,
 Join their melodious songs, and with sweet voice
 Extol their Maker's praise?—By GRACE she can:
 Go ask the sacred page: * “Blest is the man
 Whom thou chastifest, Lord, and dost instruct
 Out of thy sacred law!” And thus again
 Speaks an illustrious, animated saint;
 † “Th' almighty father chastens whom he loves,
 And scourgeth ev'ry son whom he receives:”
 And thus;—‡ “Our light and momentary pains
 Shall work out for us an eternal weight
 Of pure, substantial, and transcendent bliss.”

How oft adversity, severely kind,
 (When other tir'd expedients fail) dispels
 Th' impending clouds our fiery passions raise
 From earthly, sensual, gross pursuits; discerns
 The real estimate of things; which none
 Yet, unafflicted, ever knew; and lifts
 Our thoughts, where true, substantial, lasting joys
 Are only to be found! She, like a friend,
 Faithful and honest, open, undisguis'd,
 Pulls off the mask from our infirmities;
 Discovers vice in all her painted charms;
 Warns us to shun her soothing, Syren smiles;
 And lean on virtue as our firm support.

* Psalm xciv. 12.

† Heb. xii. 6.

‡ 2 Cor. iv. 17.

Enlighten'd by her beams, we gain new pow'rs,
 Confess the empty vanities of life,
 Thank heav'n for providential GRACE, adore
 REDEEMING LOVE, and calmly meditate
 On future joys.—Behold then here display'd
 The goodness of th' all-gracious God!—Of Him,
 Who, like a parent kind when most severe,
 His much regretted, but beloved son
 (Deaf to the charmer reason's voice, and still
 More charming virtue's) wakes from his gay dreams
 Of happiness miscall'd;—strikes where he loves;
 And makes him smart,—to give him joy for ever.

Look on the tow'ring pigmies of the world!
 Whom fame has toss'd above th' inferior class
 Of mortals; on whose brows prosperity
 Her freshest roses show'rs;—how many such,
 Who lull'd in wanton ease, or soaring high,
 In all the pride and worthlessness of pomp,
 Anticipating future bliss, pronounce
 * “ To-morrow's joys the sisters of to-day,
 And to be crown'd with more abundant charms!”
 When lo!—an unexpected stroke descends;
 Descends from an almighty arm; design'd
 By sacred wisdom, graciously severe,
 T' unfold the gay, the flatt'ring scenes of life;
 To low'r their height, and crush their blooming joys,—
 Thus signally depress'd by a reverse
 Of fortune, or some dire calamity,
 Or rather say, interposition kind
 Of Providence divine,—† They know themselves,—

* Isaiah lvi. latter part of ver. 12.

† *Γνῶσις αἰχμηλῆς, nosce teipsum*, i.e. know thyself was a memorable saying of Solon, one of the seven wise-men of Greece, and an Athenian law-giver.

Are sick of gaudy life,—with some regret
 Retire from a delusive world,—grow calm,—
 Ponder the past,—applaud victorious flight,—
 Repent,—and brighten ev'ry future scene.

Hail, then, thou offspring of indulgent heav'n!
 Sent by thy gracious author to reclaim
 The sinner from his foul misdeeds; to save
 Him sinking in the tide of luxury;
 Wean him from idle transitory joys;
 And leave him disincumber'd in the view
 Of that unknown, but promis'd land of bliss,
 Where thou shalt never tread; albeit of worth
 And import great in this abandon'd age;
 High heav'n's sweet behest, kind AFFLICTION, hail!—
 'Tis thine, thou sober Iris of the skies,
 Fair virtue's choicest, immemorial friend,
 And vice's everlasting foe! 'Tis thine,
 Commission'd by a higher pow'r, to seize
 The bloody homicide;—to pull ambition
 From his towering height;—to plead against
 The harlot's fascinating tongue,—think down
 Her guilty charms, and fly her fond embrace;—
 'Tis thine to baffle smooth-tongu'd treachery;
 And winding fraud, with all her artful wiles;—
 To melt the flinty heart;—to ope' the hand
 (Strange truth) of griping avarice;—and heal
 The wounds of violated friendship;—Thine
 To curb the vile blasphemer's lip, whose wit
 Profane 'gainst heav'n's impenetrable walls
 Dare point his weak attack.——If deaf to thee,
 Persuasive Rhetorician! those involv'd
 In black despair, with execrations loud
 Shall mourn their fatal birth; when the shrill trump

of

Of God, with solemn and imperial sound,
At the last grand, important, awful day,
Shall bid the grave's cold tenants to awake
Out of the slumber of unnumber'd years,
And summon all the nations of the earth

* "To stand before the judgment-seat of Christ;"
O how will those, on that decisive day,
Lament their dear-bought joys! How will they curse
The madness of their guilt! or shrink aghast;
While their much-injur'd and incensed judge
Pronounces sentence irreversible; —

† "Depart, ye cursed fiends, into the fire,
Which inextinguishable burns, prepar'd
For th' arch-apostate, and his horrid crew." —

Then shall affliction's pupils, that ere-while
Sunk under famine's griping paw, or lay
Neglected in the shade of cold contempt,
(Like bright'ning Phoebus after April show'rs)
Burst thro' the cloud that long eclips'd their charms,
And hear their Saviour's vivifying call; —

‡ "Come, blessed children of my Father's care,
Possess the happy realms for you ordain'd
From the foundation of the world!" —

Reason, religion, scripture, all conspire
To ratify the solemn truths I sing. —
O that with awful rapture they may strike
Each Christian's ear, and reach each Christian's heart!
So haply shall he 'scape th' eternal doom
Of unrepenting vice; and reign at last
With heav'n's all-glorious and immortal king!

* 2 Cor. v. former part of verse 10. † Matt. xxv. 41. ‡ Mat. xxv. 34.

P A R T II.

WELCOME again, Urania, to the shades
 Where sacred contemplation dwells, and where
 Her solemn sister Silence calmly reigns;
 Save that the feather'd choir, gay harmonists!
 Attune these trembling fruit-tree-tops, whose notes
 In sweetly varied numbers flow; but made
 By thy most charming and coelestial airs
 Far more harmonious, and more pleasing far
 To him who still invokes thee to direct
 His serious song; whilst he assays to prove
 That man, in all the varying scenes of life,
 "Is strictly bound to acquiesce,"—resign
 To heav'n's just will,— "rejoice,—give thanks,—adore."

Mortal! whoe'er thou art, who dost complain
 That Providence divine, with partial hand,
 Deals out her blessings to the sons of men;
 And mourn'st thy scanty share;—tell me how much
 Thou meritest of heaven's lib'ral store?
 Weigh well thy own deserts; and say, what pow'r
 Was that, that introduc'd thee on the stage
 Of life? that breath'd into the mortal mass
 (A curious frame) that particle divine,
 Thy precious soul? Thy tender infant years
 What arm sustain'd? Who led thee on the path
 Of youth? How wast thou ripen'd into man?
 By what renown'd Apollo wast thou taught
 To soar on Pegasean wing? to trace
 Proud science' mazy steps? or to explore

Dame nature's secret springs? What artist's hand,
 With symmetry proportion'd and exact,
 Form'd that corporeal clay? those organs fair
 Attun'd symphonious, where no discord reigns?
 Who cast thy present happy lot; and fix'd
 Thee in that rich, luxurious soil, where streams
 Of amber flow? where rolls Pactolus' tide,
 And plenty gushes from a thousand springs?
 Did fortune, think'st thou, or did phantom chance
 Omnipotent? — Mistaken mortal, no! —
 It is thy gracious, and all bounteous God,
 'Tis that omnific, pow'rful word, that call'd
 Light out of darkness, and from chaos rude
 Created all these glorious works,—thyself
 His own similitude express,—'tis he
 Who show's these blessings on thine head; ingrate!
 And dost thou still tax partial providence?
 Poor in abundance, dost thou still complain?
 "Deep in rich pasture," dost thou thirst for more?
 And grudge the giver of his gifts? — Vain man!
 Presume not heav'n to bias, but receive,
 With gratitude and benediction meet,
 Thine undeserved share of bliss; his name
 With songs of praise, and hallelujahs loud
 Extol; his word in living lines * "inscribe
 Upon the table of thy glowing heart;"
 "Who gives thee all things richly to enjoy
 And fills with treasures of delicious taste
 Thy sensual appetite." —

But say, shou'd heav'n
 Mix with ingredients bitter all the sweets
 Of a precarious life, and interweave

* Prov. iii. latter part of verse 3.

With man's most chearful days, a ghastly train
 Of miseries;—say shall he then presume
 To brave the fury of an angry God,
 Or murmur at his wise and just decrees?
 * “ Shall the thing form'd against the former raise
 His impious voice,—why hast thou made me thus?
 Presumptuous, and prophane!—Forbid it heav'n
 Forbid it, great Omnipotent! that man,
 Proud reptile! with presumptuous plea, should tax
 Thy Providence divine; thy ways arraign,
 Inscrutable by mortal ken; or think
 Into thy deep designs, blest Infinite!
 To dive adventures. O rather far
 With humble resignation let him bless
 The gracious hand that strikes the blow, adore
 Thy judgments wise, unfathomably deep,
 And learn to “ keep the statutes of his God!
 O let him not, with fruitless search, presume
 To wade beyond his depth; nor vainly pry
 Into thy mysteries, thou tremendous God,
 Incomprehensible! More studious far
 Himself to scan, let him with care explore
 The deep descent, and with impartial eye
 Survey the close recesses—of his heart.
 There he'll detect a wanton, gaudy train
 Of headstrong passions, and unbridled lusts,
 Which, till temptation with her trumpet loud,
 (Charmingly fatal, and attractive sound!)
 Beats up, and summons to the open field,
 Unheeded lurk;—impatient of controul,
 They rush impetuous to the dreadful war,

* Rom. ix. latter part of the 20th verse.

Engage, and plunder white-rob'd innocence
 Of all her charms:—so have we seen in skies
 Serene and calm, a putrid stagnant lake
 With smooth, undimpled surface silent stand,
 Which to the fringed bank, and pendent boughs
 A crystal mirror lends; but ruffled once
 With Eolus' rude blasts, the filth ascends,
 Its late transparent brightness is obscur'd,
 And the spectator in its native state
 Views it deform'd.—Alas! and is then such
 The heart of man, foul vice's seat, who there
 Her Pandemonium builds? And shall not heav'n
 Repay? Just heav'n! shall she not vindicate
 The sanction of her laws? shall man transgress,
 And God connive? Shall not th' Almighty Father
 Avenge the crimes of his rebellious sons?
 Happy if (so escaping) they reform,
 Repent their misdeeds foul, and suffer here,
 To bloom hereafter in perpetual bliss!
 So shall affliction prove their noblest friend;
 So shall they learn more wisdom in her school,
 Than wit or pedantry could ever boast.—
 Ponder, ye sons of grief, such truths as these!
 And know, tho' much ye suffer, yet your crimes
 Deserve far other punishment, and call
 Aloud for deeper strokes: know that your God,
 Like a physician tender, and possess'd
 Of more than Esculapian skill, prescribes
 These, tho' unwelcome, salutary draughts,
 To quench your thirst of guilty joys: ye bathe
 In sorrow's med'cinal streams to cure your ills;
 And dive for pearls of the most precious worth;—
 Inestimable gain!—well may ye learn,

From such experienc'd truths, to acquiesce
With humble heart,—“rejoice, give thanks, adore.”

Th' Almighty pours down pleasures to adorn
The present lunar scene; resumes them soon,
And in their stead sends real blessings, pains,
To fit us for the next: (Blest discipline,
Indulgently severe) and such as oft
The good man feels.—Strange truth! and as absurd
As strange, the vaunting infidel replies;—
What? does th' Almighty, just and wise, thus play
With his most darling votaries? thus deal
With his peculiar favorite sons? and most
Afflict the penitent that loves him most?—
Yes, daring monster! thy unerring God
Of his high favour no distinguish'd mark
Imprints, by bare permission of thy guilt,
Thy Syren pleasures, and thy stinging joys,
Thy false ambition, and thy mean parade:
(Thrice happy! should he change the scene, and break
The bubbles of thy pomp) But often strikes
Where he most dearly loves, and strengthens where
He strikes. The evils which a Lazarus feels
Are moral goods; distinguish'd, shining proofs
Of confidence supreme: sifted by these,
His pains corroborate his joys; and joy
His trust exalts; and trust, in pains, delights
Both heaven and himself:—So gloomy scenes,
Not such as constant shine, demand our praise:
So are bleak, rugged winter's chilling blasts
As needful as the smiling spring; and storms
Of thunder, as soft Zephyr's whisp'ring breeze.

Heav'n calls her faithful champions to the field
 Of dubious war; where care, grief, labour, pain,
 A group of potent warriors, entrench'd,
 Lay close and fruitless siege; whilst they adorn'd
 In robes of gospel-righteousness, and arm'd
 All o'er with bright ethereal panoply,
 (But chiefly faith's impenetrable shield)
 Their post-undaunted keep, "fight the good fight;"
 And nobly brave the fury of their foes;
 Till with great joy, and acclamations loud,
 Their glorious captain, God's Messiah, leads
 Them off triumphant:—Thro' mid heav'n they wing
 Their swift empyreal flight, into the courts
 Of lasting peace; where their Jehovah sits
 All thron'd in peerless blaze: applauded high
 There each shall reap his own victorious prize,
 (Tho' not all equal) in proportion due,
 And more than due to their deserts; but each
 Excelling other as excell'd on earth
 In God-like, virtuous, and coelestial deeds;
 And all in songs of sacred symphony
 To heav'n's immutable, eternal king
 Shall sweetly join melodious part, inwreath'd
 In palms, and with unfading laurels crown'd.—
 O noble spur to victory below!
 O ample cause for resignation meek
 To heav'n's resistless will! to make us cease
 Complaining, and pronounce whatever God
 Ordains, is right; that just are all his ways,
 And righteous his decrees on all his works.
 O pow'rful Christian motive to adore
 Kind Providence! and teach pale grief to sing
 In groans,—sweet hallelujahs to our God!

The cheating prospect of an After-state,
 Extended far beyond the present scene,
 And by the keen, all-piercing eye alone
 Of blessed faith beheld, (no clearer truth)
 The noblest, and most sov'reign medicine proves
 For transitory pains.—An After-state!—
 A second life!—ETERNITY!—O thou
 Tremendous, vivifying sound! Thou vast
 Unfathomable thought! In thee how sunk
 The most exalted sallies of the soul!
 Imagination's utmost stretch how lost
 In thee!—Duration infinite!—when years
 As num'rous as the countless sand; as swarms
 Of insects dancing to the tuneful Spring;
 As ears of corn in Summer's waving fields;
 As blasted leaves by Autumn's sickning breath;
 This sumless product added to the drops
 Of rain that steril Winter drown;—when all
 These circling ages are revolv'd; and these
 Still multiplied by thousand, thousands more;—
 When death—when Time itself has run its course;—
 Thou still shalt flourish in one constant bloom;
 And only be beginning—to begin.—
 Say then what art thou? Canst thou tell me what?—
 The good man's heaven, and the sinner's hell.
 And Faith, Repentance, Heav'n-born Virtue, these,—
 These are the keys t'unlock thy golden gates.—
 Here is sure footing; here is strong support!
 These are the pillars that will never flinch!
 The sick-man's most reviving cordials!
 And meagre famine's richest store! These are
 The songs that sooth the throbbing pangs of life!
 The sweets that mollify its bitter draughts!

The

The balm that heals its deepest wounds! the strength
Of age, and succour of distress! Yes, these
Strike light in darkness; lighten pain in death;
And pave the paths to everlasting peace.—

Taste, ye afflicted, ye desponding! taste
These sov'reign cures, for all your ills: lean still
On Heav'n, and trust in the Supreme: By grace
Resolve, "as strictly bound, to acquiesce;"
'Gainst all the rapid streams of whirling Time
Stand fast; confide, and tremble to offend.

Peruse attentively, ye drooping hearts!
(And strive to imitate, while ye peruse)
That exemplary catalogue of saints,
And consecrated martyrs; aptly drawn
By that illustrious * convert's pen, who shar'd
The welcome suff'rings he describes:—How calm!
How heav'nly meek! how patient! how resign'd
To heav'n's just will! how confident! how bold!
Floating on sorrow's highest tide! serene
Amid the storms of a tempestuous age!
In flames triumphant, and in death secure!—
Among the rest, like a distinguish'd star,
Behold the once vindictive Pharisee,
Th' impetuous Saul, in pious zeal enwrapp'd!
And hark! what manly, animating sounds
His faith unshaken, and undaunted trust
In God inspires:—† "Where is the threat'ning pow'r,
That can divide us from the love of Christ?
Can tribulation, anguish, or distress?
Relentless rage, or famine's ghastly front?

* St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews, xi.

† Rom. viii. 35. 37.

Can nakedness, or peril, or the sword?
 No! these are more than doubly vanquish'd foes,
 By the puissant and all-conqu'ring force
 Of a Redeemer's love." And thus again
 Th' enraptur'd saint, with energy divine;—
 * "Troubled on ev'ry side, yet not distress'd;
 Perplex'd, but not in a desponding state;
 Expos'd to persecution's scorpion-sting,
 Yet not forlorn; cast down, but not destroy'd."—
 Now view the rock on which he founds his hopes;—
 † "When this corporeal building is dissolv'd,
 Then shall we enter an eternal house,
 A most resplendent adamantinè fabrick,
 And rear'd by hands not mortal, but divine."—
 O happy they, who, like this fav'rite band,
 Exult in tortures, and triumphant fight
 Beneath their Saviour's banner, and their God's!
 Thrice happy they, whom Providence ordains
 To such a glorious strife; and who defy
 Satan's combin'd allies! who, rich in grace,
 Submissive to each heav'n-descending stroke,
 Recline their patient head; and like true heirs
 To an unfading and immortal crown,
 In all the desp'rate changes of the world,
 Resign to the Creator's will, adore,
 And bless his pow'r.

Now raise a loftier theme!
 And from sublime example still aspire
 To more sublime;—From men we sprung to saints,
 And blessed martyrs; and from martyrs rise

* 2 Cor. iv. 8, 9. † 2 Cor. v. 1.

To God.—O that Urania would inspire
 An equal song! lest vent'rous I degrade
 The subject with my muse.—Ye sons of "care,
 Grief, labour, pain!" ye sinking, spiritless!
 Ye burthen'd with the num'rous loads of life!
 Ye "weary, and ye heavy laden," turn
 Your eyes to groaning Calvary.—There shine
 The noblest truths! There Consolation glows
 In all her tender charms! Strong motives urge;
 And sacred violence inflames the soul,
 And breathes sweet resignation and content.—
 Behold th' accurs'd, the ignominious tree!
 The pillar that supports a sinking world!
 The nail that fastens all our hopes! See there
 Th' illustrious sufferer hang! Behold the hand
 That pours the healing balm of peace! the side
 That bleeds for mortal wounds,—for you,—for me!—
 O the transcendant love of God to man!
 * "Love no where to be found less than divine!"
 Justice and love combin'd! Both reconcil'd;
 Exalted both by the stupendous cross.—
 Hail, son of God! Thou great Philanthropist!
 Thou universal Saviour; best of friends!
 Thou miracle of pain, of joy, of bliss!
 What heart but melts at such a tragic scene?
 What heart but burns with heav'nly love? but glows
 With gratitude and adoration pure?
 What heart so flinty, but that foul revolt
 Original bewails? that thus brought down
 From that bright Empyrean, where thou sitt'st,
 Second to God, Thyself his only son,

* Milton's Paradise Lost, book iii.

To expiate man's! offence,—to bleed, to die.—
 Then nature groan'd in sympathy:—* “ Behold
 The temple of the Living God now rent
 In twain! the earth convuls'd! the stubborn rocks
 Divide! the jaws of savage death relent,
 And from the grave's cold bosom pour her prey!”—
 O unexampled mercy, grace, and love!
 (How can we dwell on such a theme too long?)
 O most stupendous spectacle of woe!—
 Of woe to God, to angels, and to men!—
 Here's suff'ring innocence in all its charms!
 Here's suff'ring innocence to expiate guilt!
 Behold that sanguine stream! (O miracle
 Indeed of mercy, grace, and love!) It flow'd
 To purify the foulest stains: he died
 The dead to save;—He died that man might live
 For ever.—Blush at such a tragedy!
 Ye fretful, ye repining spirits! blush
 To see your noblest patron, and your friend,
 The well-beloved son of the Most High,
 Your blest Redeemer and your God, serene
 Amidst a sad variety of pains.
 His steps from Beth'lem to that fatal † mount,
 Which saw the finish'd stroke, admiring trace;
 And learn from such a pattern to be calm;
 “ To acquiesce, rejoice, give thanks, adore.”

O ye co-heirs of pain with him that chaunts
 These truly Christian, tho' incondite lays!
 With heart-felt consolation give your ears
 To these coelestial sounds:— ‡ “ Blessed are they

* Matt. xxvii. 51, 52.

† Mount Calvary.

‡ Matt. v. 4. 11.

Who mourn ; for they shall real comfort find !
 And thus the same exhilarating voice ; —
 “ * Blessed are ye who are revil'd, defam'd,
 And persecuted falsely for my sake !
 Triumph, rejoice, and be exceedingly glad !
 Great is your need in heav'n ! for prophets thus
 Were stuck with persecution's fland'rous darts ! ”

Say then, does heav'n-directed Providence,
 In all her ways, just, wise, and good, ordain
 That loathsome sickness, with her hateful train
 Of maladies, convulsions, choleric pangs,
 Raging catarrhs, fevers, or racking rheums,
 The drowning dropsy, or th' intestine stone,
 Acute, incessant qualms of heart-sick pain,
 Or wan consumption with her feeble step,
 Attend our tott'ring clay ? — Behold the drops,
 The purple drops of sweat behold ! that stain'd
 That Dei-human form, when vilely stretch'd
 On agony's most tort'ring wheel : like him,
 With meek submission, and undaunted trust,
 That sits fast by the side of faith, 'tis ours
 To cry ; O Father ! † “ Not my will, but thine
 Be done.” — Does poverty, with visage pale
 And thin, stalk round our solitary cell ?
 And with her chilling forms blast all the bloom
 Of life ? — View a Redeemer's humble state ;
 That menial form, that indigence divine ; —
 § “ Whilst foxes to their peaceful dens, and birds
 Into their nests were flunk ; The Son of Man,
 Creation's best, and universal Lord —

* Matt. v. 11, 12. † Luke xii. 44. ‡ Ib. xii. 42. § Matt. viii. 20.

Found no retreat."——Does defamation vile,
 Does slander, sharper than the serpent's tooth,
 " Whose tongue out-venoms all the worms of Nile,
 Whose pois'nous breath rides on the posting winds,
 And searches every corner of the earth,"
 Eat out the heart of life? fair honour's name
 (That jewel of inestimable price)
 Glozing devour?—Nay let us yet be calm;
 And to that amiable pattern point
 Of universal Good; * " who when revil'd,
 Reviled not again; who in the midst
 Of suff'rings, threaten'd not; but to a just,
 And most unerring Judge, refer'd his cause."——
 Has that insatiate, savage archer Death,
 Shot his invenom'd darts; relentless tore
 From our sad bosom a most faithful friend;—
 Some Jonathan, some dearer, better part?—
 Is a Philander, or a Lucia gone?—
 Or is belov'd Narcissa now no more?—
 Thine heavenly aid; and in the tend'rest flow
 Of grief, address thy sacred charms; address
 That venerable name, thine Author great,
 Who, for a while, from where he dwells enthron'd
 In highest bliss, descended to redeem
 Man's mortal crime; descended from the breast
 Of his own Father dear; at whose right hand
 He now, exalted high, triumphant sits
 O'er sin and death; there ready to receive
 His faithful elect sons, again conjoin'd,
 " In amity's indissoluble chain,"

* 1 Pet. ii. 23.

With their Philanders and their Lucias dear,
Whose mutual presence will improve their mutual bliss.

May it be ours, thro' all the various scenes
Of a tumultuous world, to lean on heav'n
For our support! May it be ours to praise
With heart-felt gratitude th' ETERNAL GOD!
May we, with suit sincere, and fervent zeal,
Address, in suppliant form, the THRONE OF GRACE!
Address REDEEMING LOVE! to heal the wounds
That monster sin has made; to sooth the mind;
To pour the balm of comfort on the soul;
T' enliven sorrow's melancholy gloom;
And banish terrors from the tender breast.—
By These conducted, may we stand secure
Gainst Vice's subtle, soothing, Syren smiles;
With care avoid her tempting primrose-paths;
And wed fair Virtue's never-fading charms—
O may high heav'n's sweet chorus chaunt, AMEN!

There, my associates! may we join the choir.
When this frail scene of life's for ever part.
There may we tune our rapt'rous songs of praise
To Him who made us, Author of all life!
There, in great triumph, may we meet again
To part no more! where endless pleasure dwells,
That knows no pain, and joys unbounded flow.
There the sad heart, that now heaves many a sigh,
Shall ache no more;—the sympathizing tear
Forget to flow:—yes, there we shall defy
The loudest roarings of life's boist'rous sea,
And be for ever, and for ever blest:—
When all our labours, and our cares shall cease,
And sin, and sorrow shall disturb no more.

The E N D.